



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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PHILIP D. MURPHY

Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER

Lt. Governor

SHAWN M. LATOURETTE

Commissioner

June 24, 2021

Dear Monroe Township Residents,

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) takes very seriously the concerns raised by residents in and around the Inwood Estates neighborhood of Monroe Township concerning the former Monroe Township Landfill Superfund Site (Landfill).

As you may know, the Landfill property is owned by the Township and is operated by Republic Services, which acquired former operator Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI). The Landfill was used for disposal of municipal and household waste from 1955 to 1978. Under the federal Superfund program, investigation and cleanup activities occurred at the Landfill throughout the 1980s and, in 1993, it was determined that no further active remediation was necessary at the Landfill. As DEP had overseen most of the remedial work conducted by BFI under an Administrative Consent Order, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) subsequently concurred with DEP's issuance of a no further action record of decision (ROD) setting forth the conditions of closure and ongoing monitoring and maintenance obligations.

Despite the closure of the Landfill and its removal from the federal Superfund list, to ensure the continued protectiveness of the prior remedial activities, environmental monitoring and routine leachate collection and removal has been ongoing at the Landfill and will continue for the foreseeable future. In coordination with DEP, USEPA conducts a regular Five-Year Review of the integrity of the Landfill cleanup remedy. The most recent review was completed in 2019 and concluded that "the remedy at the Monroe Township Landfill site is protective of human health and the environment." The report is available at: <https://semspub.epa.gov/work/02/568938.pdf>.

In accordance with the ROD, leachate, *i.e.*, water that percolates through the landfill, has historically been collected in an on-site system and conveyed via Monroe Township's sanitary sewer system for ultimate treatment and discharge at the Middlesex County Sewage Authority's Old Bridge Sewage Treatment Plant. In the late summer of 2020, residents in the Inwood Estates neighborhood reported odors that they believed to be emanating from the Landfill. DEP investigated these reports alongside BFI and the Township. While these reports were investigated, the routine discharge of leachate to the Township's sanitary sewer system was temporarily suspended. As an interim measure, leachate has been removed from the Landfill by truck for off-site disposal.

The DEP is committed to ensuring the long-term protectiveness of the Landfill remedy and thoroughly examining the odor and other concerns raised by members of the community. Since September of 2020, DEP has worked closely with Monroe Township, BFI, USEPA and third-party consultants to evaluate the reported odors, the integrity of the landfill leachate collection system, and the sanitary sewer lines to which the leachate is discharged. DEP officials have made multiple community visits and conducted several inspections. These inspections have not revealed any imminent risks to the environment or public health. Nevertheless, investigations will continue, and the residents' concerns will remain foremost in our minds as we evaluate the path forward. For example, DEP understands the frustration caused by the tanker truck traffic, and DEP is actively evaluating options for future leachate disposal.

DEP intends to engage directly with members of the community in a public meeting on this important topic following further technical review. DEP has been in frequent communications with Monroe Township Mayor Stephen Dalina and his staff, and DEP has committed to co-host an in-person public meeting in the weeks ahead to explain the evaluations that have been conducted, to address community questions and concerns, and to discuss the potential next steps.

At present, the parties involved are in the process of evaluating BFI's proposed plan to eliminate the truck traffic by reintroducing leachate into the sanitary sewer system with added flow limitations and enhanced monitoring. This plan will be significantly vetted by professionals with deep expertise, including the USEPA, the Army Corps of Engineers, DEP, the DEP's independent technical consultant, and Monroe Township's independent environmental consultant. No final determination on this plan will be made by DEP prior to further engagement with the community.

Please be assured that DEP, alongside our partners at all levels of government, are working diligently to address your concerns. At DEP, the protection of our environment and public health is our number one priority. As the Department's newly appointed Commissioner, I am committed to ensuring that your community's concerns are thoroughly evaluated, and that all next steps are protective of the environment and public health.

We welcome your continued input as we work to address these important issues.

Sincerely,



Shawn M. LaTourette
Commissioner

c: Mayor Stephen Dalina, Monroe Township

